



Virginia Department of Health
Office of Licensure and Certification

The Accreditation Option for Deemed Medicare Status

The Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) directed State Survey Agencies (SSAs) in its November 5, 2007 Survey and Certification Letter (S&C-08-03) to reprioritize their Medicare survey activities. CMS assigned initial certification surveys to the *lowest tier* (4) of its four-tiered survey priority matrix. It specifically instructed SSAs to make complaint investigations, recertification surveys, and other infrastructure work for *existing* Medicare providers a higher priority compared with certification of *new* Medicare providers.

The operational implications of this mandate are significant for the OLC, as well as for providers seeking CMS certified provider status. *The OLC will not conduct initial certification surveys until it has first completed all of its higher priority survey activities.* Providers seeking an initial certification survey are advised that there may be a considerable delay before OLC is able to schedule these surveys.

Many providers have the option of attaining accreditation that conveys deemed Medicare status by participating in an initial survey conducted by a CMS-approved accreditation organization (AO) in lieu of a Medicare survey conducted by a SSA or by CMS. This deemed-status accreditation is likely to be the fastest route to certification. While there is no cost associated with a CMS or SSA survey, resource limitations and CMS' affirmation of its survey priorities severely limits the number of initial certification surveys that will be conducted nationally, as well as in Virginia. Many provider applicants have concluded that the benefits of an AO survey are worth the expense, particularly the expense of waiting for a no-cost SSA or CMS survey.

CMS has identified three AOs whose accreditation it has deemed for Medicare certification purposes. The contact information for these AOs is below:

Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP)

1300 19th Street NW

Suite 150

Washington, D.C. 20036

Contact Person: Gail Surrency

202-862-3413

800-656-9656, ext.12

gsurrency@chapinc.org

Joint Commission for Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO)

601 13th Street NW

Suite 1150N

Washington, D.C. 20005

Contact Person: Trisha Kurtz

202-783-6655

pkurtz@jcaho.org



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Accreditation Commission for Health Care, Inc. (ACHC)
4700 Falls of the Neuse Road
Suite 280
Raleigh, NC 27609
Contact Person: Tom Cesar
919-785-1214
tcesar@achc.org

Providers must complete their OASIS Test *prior* to their initial survey. In addition, they must have admitted a minimum of 10 skilled care patients prior to the survey. At least seven of those patients must be actively receiving services on the day of the survey. The initial certification survey will be *immediately* terminated should the OLC learn that the provider has not admitted the required minimum number of Medicare patients.